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ABSTRACT

A discussion of literacy in bilingual and multilingual communities, particularly those with heavy concentrations of limited-English-proficient individuals, focuses on the role of the family in literacy education efforts. First, the diversity of such communities is examined, noting that linguistic/cultural, educational, rural/urban, and religious factors provide the populations with varied experiences and backgrounds. The primary areas of commonality appear to be the use of survival strategies (use of kin resources, creation of new kinship bonds, development of community organizations, sharing of resources), desire for communication skills, and the conflicted relationship between power and parental authority. Some governmental and private family literacy initiatives are described, and promising directions and elements are highlighted. These include broad conceptualization of family literacy, collaboration, placing of value on both traditional and new culture, and continual inquiry into new possibilities. Some preliminary recommendations for public policy formation are made, including providing assistance to existing age-segregated educational programs, working within the existing family literacy infrastructure to create intergenerational programming, and creating demonstration projects as laboratories for innovative practices. A 42-item bibliography is included. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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ED 373 604

Restoring the Intergenerational Cycle of Family Teaching: Family Literacy in Multilingual Communities

by

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Background Paper Prepared for

Project on English as a Second Language Service

for Adults

by

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December 1993

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FOREWORD

This paper is one of several prepared by consultants to The Project on Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) of the Southport Institute for Policy Analysis. These papers were commissioned to help the Project's staff develop an in-depth understanding of various issues and perspectives bearing on the present state and future directions of ESL service in the United States.

This and the other papers commissioned were prepared in 1993. The consultants who prepared them met as a group three times during that year and vigorously debated each other's work as well as other issues concerning ESL. At no time during this process did the Project's staff require that the consultants agree with each other or with the conclusions being formulated by the staff. The consultants were given complete freedom to state their own ideas.

As a result, the views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Southport Institute, the Project on ESL any of the other consultants involved with the Project on ESL.

The Southport Institute is making these working papers available to help increase understanding and stimulate discussion about the problems of adult literacy and as an expression of gratitude for the contribution of the authors to the Project on ESL.

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The working papers prepared for the Project are:

Carol Clymer-Spradling:	Quality, Standards and Accountability in ESL Programs
JoAnn (Jodi) Crandall:	Improving the Quality of Adult ESL Programs: Building the Nation's Capacity to Meet the Educational and Occupational Needs of Adults with Limited English Proficiency
Inaam Mansoor:	The Use of Technology in Adult ESL Programs: Current Practice - Future Promise
Barbara Prete:	Evolution of ESL Policy in New York City
Gail Weinstein-Shr:	Restoring the Intergenerational Cycle of Family Teaching: Family Literacy In Multilingual Communities
Terrence G. Wiley:	Access, Participation, and Transition in Adult ESL: Implications for Policy and Practice

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Restoring the intergenerational cycle of family teaching:
Family literacy in multilingual communities[1]

Gail Weinstein-Shr
December, 1993

Imagine this scenario: The anti-immigration backlash in the United States has grown beyond immigrants themselves to vicious attacks against the professionals that serve them. Teachers, teacher trainers, administrators and policy analysts sympathetic with immigrants are all forced to leave the U.S. with our families. Somehow, we end up in Laos. Glad for our lives, we take what we can get. The only work available is in the lowland rice farms. Our academic training has not prepared us well. Because of flabby upper arms and inexperience, we plant slowly and get very low wages. We can only hope that things will get better when we learn some Lao, so we can get better jobs.

I imagine my daughter Hannah going to school. Of course, Lao is the language of instruction. There are times when she doesn't understand the school assignment. Neither do I. After long outdoor days, I am lucky to have a slot in overcrowded adult classes for LLP (Limited Lao Proficient) adults, where I learn the essential vocabulary of farm

[1]Some of the material in this report appears in other writings, including in Weinstein-Shr, in press a, in press b, and 1990).

implements. Hannah hangs out with some Lao kids. She wants to fit in. Soon she talks to me in Lao. I ask her to translate some of the papers I receive from her school, but she teases that she doesn't understand English anymore. Some of her older schoolmates seem, indeed, to have forgotten.

We hear of Lao teenagers that tangle with commerce from the highland poppy fields. Our neighbor's son is among the uprooted Americans flirting with the excitement. We do not know whether the Lao police are onto this, and what the consequences could be for the boy. Another compatriot's daughter is pregnant- she refuses to tell whether the father is Lao or American. Hannah is not yet old enough for that. One less thing to worry about -- for now.

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The terms family and intergenerational literacy have both come into vogue only recently, and have been used in different ways by different people. The terms and the many ways they have been used have in common a recognition that the relationships between children and adults are important, and that these relationships somehow affect literacy use and development.

The initial thrust for family and intergenerational programming grew from experience and research showing that parents' skills and practices influence the school

achievement of their children (e.g. Teale 1982, Sticht and McDonald 1989). The term "family literacy" has gained recognition through the growth of national programs such as Even Start legislation, OBEMLA Title VII, the National Center for Family Literacy and the Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation, whose primary purposes have been to support parents in promoting the school achievement of their children. These initiatives will be described in more detail below.

Intergenerational literacy has often been used in a broader sense, including not only parents and children but also other adults such as grandparents, neighbors, non-parental guardians, or even volunteers who will be creating new relationships with the learners. The terms " intergenerational" and "family literacy" have both been used to describe what is happening with literacy in the lives of children and adults (Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988), and they have also been used to describe programs designed to strengthen literacy resources by involving at least two generations (Nickse, 1990).

If I were to find myself in Laos with my family, what would I want for Hannah, for my husband and for myself in this new life? How could my adult classes, Hannah's school classes, or family classes contribute to making that new life? What would our Lao neighbors want? What would any of us want? The purpose of this report is to explore this question in light of current and potential policy initiatives for family literacy in the United States. For natives or immigrants, in Laos, the United

States or anywhere else, the degree to which families can provide support, sustenance and guidance to their members has an enormous impact on the members themselves, as well as on the communities to which they belong. External stresses in general, and intergenerational stresses in particular, characterize family life for all people in rapidly changing societies.

For language minority families[2], however, language and literacy play a particularly poignant role in exacerbating the challenges modern life. Because children are usually in a position to acquire English language and literacy more quickly than their parents, roles are often reversed as adults depend on children to translate and to solve other language and literacy related problems. When adults lose moral authority over their children, when children no longer feel that their parents are in control, when the knowledge of elders is no longer seen as useful, the family loses its ability to teach and protect its members. School failure, alcoholism, drug abuse and gang membership are among the visible and costly consequences when families no longer have the resources to nurture their members.

The report begins with an invitation to peek into the lives of families in bilingual

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[2] Please note that both "language minority" and "immigrant" are both imperfect terms, but are the most useful ones available for this discussion. Some speakers of other languages outnumber English speakers in their communities, making the notion of "minority" problematic. The term "immigrant" does not accurately describe the 24% of all adults in the U.S. with limited English proficiency who were born here. Some speakers of other languages have been here since before Columbus. Perhaps the most accurate term would be "families from bilingual and multilingual communities". This gets rather cumbersome, however. The reader is asked to indulge the author with acceptance of these terms until a better term is agreed upon.

and multilingual communities, with a focus on the role of language and literacy. The second section outlines some governmental and private family literacy initiatives as they currently exist. In the third section, I highlight what I consider to be promising directions from exemplary efforts. Finally, the report concludes with preliminary recommendations for policy. The hope here is for creating conditions in which language and literacy programming can meet the needs of immigrant families, while helping such families to both support their own members and contribute to their communities. I argue here that it is not only possible, but imperative, both for language minorities themselves and for all of us in our increasingly multicultural communities, to provide educational programming that strengthens rather than divides families, fostering in them a haven for members to cope with a world of uncertainty and change.

I. Language, literacy and everyday lives: Diverse families, common themes

Refugee and immigrant adults are as diverse as the countries they come from and the circumstances that brought them here. Ethnic groups which may seem homogeneous can be extremely diverse in any number of ways. Linguistic diversity is one obvious way. Latin Americans, for example, may come from any number of countries and may speak Spanish as a first or second language. While Peruvians and

Puerto Ricans may both speak Spanish as a native language, the varieties they speak may be so different as to impede intelligibility. An indigenous Mayan from Guatemala may have learned Spanish as a lingua franca for the market place, and may only speak it in a pigeonized form. Filipinos, on the other hand, come from a small set of islands where no less than 150 mutually unintelligible languages are spoken in addition to Spanish (California Department of Education [CDOE], 1986).

Second, rural/urban differences often accompany educational differences. The first wave of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Cuban refugees, for example, were university educated city-dwellers, while later arrivals were farmers who had never held a pencil before seeking refuge. These groups bring with them very different experiences with formal schooling as well as with work, resulting in very dissimilar tools for adapting to life in the United States.

Religion is yet another source of difference; among Chinese, some are Christian, some are Buddhist, while yet others are avid atheists (CDOE, 1984). The differences go on. In a seemingly homogeneous Hmong refugee community in Philadelphia, for example, religious differences in degree of involvement with the Christian church reflect two sub-groups with very different kinship patterns and different goals for literacy. One group is focused on assimilating into American society as quickly as possible, while the other group is most interested in using literacy to preserve tradition and to stay connected with the homeland (Weinstein-Shr, 1993) . These

kinds of differences have profound implications for planning educational programs, if our programs are to take into account the needs and resources of the families we serve.

Yet despite the diversity among refugees and immigrants, similar themes repeatedly emerge as children and adults manage life in their new setting. The themes selected here grow from my own work with refugees and immigrants in Philadelphia through Project LEIF[3]. These are survival, communication, and power, which are explored below.

Survival (focus on refugees)[4]

> Soldiers come we run always run. I have my baby inside. I run. Baby come out I can't rest. My family we hear guns. I run with baby. When we not run baby dead. Five my children die from Khmer Rouge in my country (as told to P. Lopatin, 1990).

Refugees in particular are those who have come to the United States are here

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[3] Project LEIF, Learning English through Intergenerational Friendship, is an intergenerational tutoring program in which college students tutor English to refugee elders. To date, over 1,000 volunteers have worked with Hmong, Cambodian, Lao, Chinese and Latino elders in Philadelphia. For more information, see Weinstein-Shr, 1989 and Lewis and Varbero, In press.

[4] While the material that follows draws primarily on my own experiences with Southeast Asian refugees, it must be pointed out that the majority of those who speak a language other than English in the United States are native speakers of Spanish. Many of the themes and issues, however are the same.

despite all odds. Leaving their countries often meant surviving by physical endurance, sheer wits, and enormous emotional will. It is rare to find a Cambodian who has been spared the death of a family member by murder or starvation during flight. Hmong refugees moved large families through the jungles of Laos, walking with their children and infants by night, hiding in leaf-covered camps by day. The horrors encountered by Vietnamese "boat people" came to public attention with tales of family separation, loss at sea, brutal piracy, and hostile receptions on the other end of the nightmarish journeys. If refugees were indeed the "helpless peasants" that they are sometimes made out to be in the media, they wouldn't be here. They would be dead. Those who have made it to the United States are here because they are survivors.

The same survival resources that enabled people to escape under desperate conditions often serve them well as they adapt to life in a challenging new setting. One way of coping has been to draw on traditional kin resources. Hmong refugees of the same generation who share a clan name, for example, consider themselves "brothers" or "sisters" and expect to enjoy specific rights and fulfill expected obligations with their clan mates. In Laos a man might be housed by a clan mate on a journey between villages; in the U.S., one young Hmong leader reports that he can travel to a new city for a conference, look up his clan name in the phone book upon arrival at the airport, and expect to be picked up and housed by clan mates he has never met (Weinstein-Shr, 1993). This web of kin support can be a critical resource

for some newcomers as they manage new lives in America.

A second way of managing in the face of trauma has been to draw on the traditional strengths of families while creating new kinds of families. Because of the unspeakable circumstances of flight, it is unusual for any Cambodian nuclear family, for example, to have resettled intact. As a result, Cambodian families in America are often reconstituted with survivors who create fictive bonds to cope with terrible loss (CDOE, 1988). Lao mothers who once formed cooperative groups for rearing children in Laos as an adaptive response to the loss of men in wars may continue these patterns of group support in America (ibid.). These examples illustrate the remarkable adaptive resources of people under siege.

A third way of responding to a new setting is through the development of community organizations, in which traditional forms of leadership may exist side by side with new ones. Mutual Assistance Associations (henceforth MAAs) are a unique form of self-help in which members of the community itself organize to help themselves. Presidents of MAAs are often young men selected by the community to provide links with the English-speaking host culture. Yet the authority of these leaders is often shared or surpassed by elders whose influence in community matters is not as easily visible to monolingual Americans (see Lewis and Varbero, in press). With traditional and new kinds of leadership in their communities, families may have a variety of resources available for solving a range of problems. Other Community

Based Organizations (CBOs), especially those run by ethnic leaders, may play a similar role.

A fourth strategy for survival is to share resources and to find bargains that may not be visible to long-time residents. Hmong families in Philadelphia, for example, buy pigs wholesale at the outskirts of the city to butcher and share among family groups. Through informal networks, newcomers to a city may know of stores, unknown to local residents, where prices are negotiable. In addition, like the non-literate native speakers of English we learn about from Fingeret (1983), many immigrants and refugees who have limited experience with print rely on social networks or their own wits to solve a wide variety of literacy-related problems (Weinstein-Shr, 1990). Ironically, most beginning ESL curricula for adults focus on "survival English". At Project LEIF, when older adults were asked why they wanted to learn English, they rarely brought up survival concerns (Weinstein-Shr and Lewis, 1991). Rather, most reported that they wanted to learn English to be able to communicate with children or grandchildren. The second theme, then, is communication.

Communication

I love my grandchildren very much. I am learning English so I can talk to my grandchildren. But I also want them to understand a little Chinese. I think every

language is useful! --Susan Yin (1992)

For uprooted families, whether migration is forced or voluntary, resettlement in a setting where a different language is spoken profoundly affects newcomers' roles and relationships. The experiences of Project LEIF participants provide examples of these changes. One tutor recounted his change of perspective when he asked his quiet, serious elder tutee a simple question; Were there open air markets in her homeland? Her grandson translated her answer, in which she told of how she would gather with women friends to eat and chat, spending many pleasant afternoons at the marketplace. Until then, her tutor had not imagined her as the bubbly, sociable, talkative person she must have been in her native setting. A Puerto Rican woman reported feeling like an outsider in her own children's homes when her grandchildren speak English and refuse to answer her in the language she understands. A Hmong woman spoke of her fear that her grandchildren will not know what life was like in Laos, and that as their linguistic repertoire changes, she will have no way to tell them.

Some uprooted groups make special efforts to promote oral and written native language development for cultural continuity. When bilingual programs are not provided by an American school district, some groups such as the Chinese pay privately to send their children to Chinese weekend schools. Among some groups such as the Hmong, native language literacy has spread informally in some sub-

communities. While certain uprooted groups create contexts for linguistic and cultural maintenance, other groups are anxious to acculturate as quickly as possible, and encourage their children to make the transition from the native language to spoken and written English. Some researchers suggest that language use among today's uprooted families may be affected more strongly by generation than by any other factor (McKay and Weinstein-Shr, 1993). This means that language plays an unprecedented role in the adaptation of families to their new lives and in their relationships to one another.

Because of more opportunities to hear, study, and interact in English, children learn the language of their new home much more quickly than their parents or grandparents do. As a result, adults must often rely on children for solving language and literacy-related problems. For parents of school-age children, this means relying on children to decipher communications from school. One Cambodian man tearfully reported that his son had been expelled six months earlier. The boy left every morning at eight and returned at four, so the man did not know about the expulsion until six months later when a neighbor told him. He had, until then, depended on the boy to interpret messages from school. This raises the third theme that repeatedly emerges in the tales of newcomers- the theme of power and parental authority.

Power and authority

I have ears but I am deaf! I have a tongue, but I am mute!

- Chinese elder, on life in an English speaking neighborhood

What happens when children are the translators, the decoders, the messengers for their families? At Project LEIF, one tutor noted in his log that he wondered who was in charge when he found the home of his elder tutee plastered with heavy metal posters all over the house. A Lao teen sabotaged his mother's efforts to learn English, disrupting her English lessons and repeatedly telling her that she was too old to learn. One tutor reported that when she called her Vietnamese par'ner on the phone, the woman's son "hovered" on the line, as if English had become his domain to supervise and control. When this woman couldn't solve a problem, she let it go unaddressed rather than asking her children.

The issues of power and authority have an important impact on schooling. At Project LEIF, adults often reported to us their frustration at the degree to which they can (or cannot) help their children. At best, many wish they could help with their children's homework. At the least, some would like to understand the scope of the schoolwork, in order to know when their child has completed the assigned tasks. Many Asian parents report their fear of looking stupid to their children. Even when kids are willing to be helpful, parents report their shame in having to depend on them.

Power shifts that occur through communication can be as uncomfortable for children as they are for adults. When Asian teens were asked to give advice to teachers at a local conference, one response was particularly poignant: "Please", commented a Vietnamese teen, " if I translate for you when you talk to my mother, don't look at me, look at her when you speak". This youth spoke of his embarrassment when his own mother was marginalized, and when he was treated like an authority in front of her.

These examples show that literacy events and speech events can be structured in ways to ascribe roles that are empowered or powerless for the interlocutors. The resulting shifts in power have consequences for children and adults alike. In order to invite adults to become part of their children's schooling, educators must become aware of the kinds of literacy and speech events that we unwittingly set up through our work. Educators also need to be aware of ways in which interactions with families play into the evolving relationships of children and adults, especially as programs operate on what slowly becomes the "linguistic turf" of the children.

If any of us were to end up in Laos, we would surely want our children to do well in school. But that is not all that we would want. Would we be successful learners of Lao? Would our children forget English or refuse to speak it? Would the wisdom of our experience come to seem irrelevant to them? To what extent would their schooling lead them to see our language and cultural resources as valuable? To what

extent, with our limited Lao, would we be able to guide, discipline and protect our children and take care of our aging parents? For natives or immigrants, in Laos, the United States or anywhere else, the degree to which families can provide support, sustenance and guidance to their members has an enormous impact on the family members themselves, as well as on the communities in which they reside.

II. Family literacy efforts: Existing efforts, existing needs

Family literacy efforts are proliferating in federal programs as well as through a variety of private efforts. This section briefly examines the types of models that have been prevalent in the literature, sketches some of the federal and private initiatives to date, and then suggests directions for examining the degree to which these initiatives successfully address the needs of immigrant families.

Models for family and intergenerational literacy programming

Goals and curricula. One set of goals for family and intergenerational programming is to provide early childhood intervention, and to enlist the help of parents in supporting their children's early childhood development. Programs with this goal often talk about the notion of parents as the "first teacher" (e.g. Barbara Bush Foundation), and emphasize the role of parents in the school readiness of young

children.

A second and related set of goals for family and intergenerational programming has been improving the school achievement of children by promoting parental involvement in their schooling. Programs aimed primarily at increasing parental involvement are constituted by activities that encourage or teach parents: 1) to provide a home environment that supports children's learning needs; 2) to volunteer in the schools as aides or other roles; 3) to monitor children's progress and communicate with school personnel; and 4) to tutor children at home to reinforce work done in school (Simich-Dudgeon 1986).

Those programs that aim primarily at increased parental involvement in schooling often draw on competency-based curricula for adults which are designed specifically for enabling parents to respond to school expectations. Content might include specific lessons on how to read report cards, how to talk to a teacher, understanding the structure of the school, or how to help with homework. These programs may also include information about health and nutrition, [American notions of] parenting skills, or other competencies that have been identified as useful for members of a particular community.

A third set of goals often found in family literacy programs is "... to improve skills, attitudes, values and behaviors linked to reading" (Nickse 1990). Models that aim at these goals are often constituted by a variety of reading activities. Some of

these may involve teaching parents to imitate behaviors that occur in the homes of "successful" readers such as reading aloud to children and asking them specific types of questions as they read. Parents of young children may practice in adult groups on books that they may then read to their children.

While it may or may not be stated explicitly, the development of basic literacy skills is central to any of these program goals. An adult who cannot read a report card faces specific obstacles in participating in the schooling of her children. Likewise, family literacy efforts for immigrants and refugees must make central the development of English language skills, both oral and written. Adults who cannot understand any English, no matter how committed they may be to helping their children, are handicapped in voicing their concerns to a teacher or administrator, or in supporting the success of their children in an English-speaking world. No matter which goals a family literacy program professes, development of proficiency in language and literacy specific to those goals is critical to the success or failure of the effort.

Participants. In her overview of family literacy programs, Nickse (1989) creates a framework for classifying programs according to the type of participant (Do adults and children participate? Is one versus the other the targeted beneficiary?) and the type of intervention (classes for adults? classes with children and adults together? some combination?) The goals of the program will determine both the participants

targeted as well as the type of intervention that is selected. The graphic below illustrates these configurations.

Figure 1

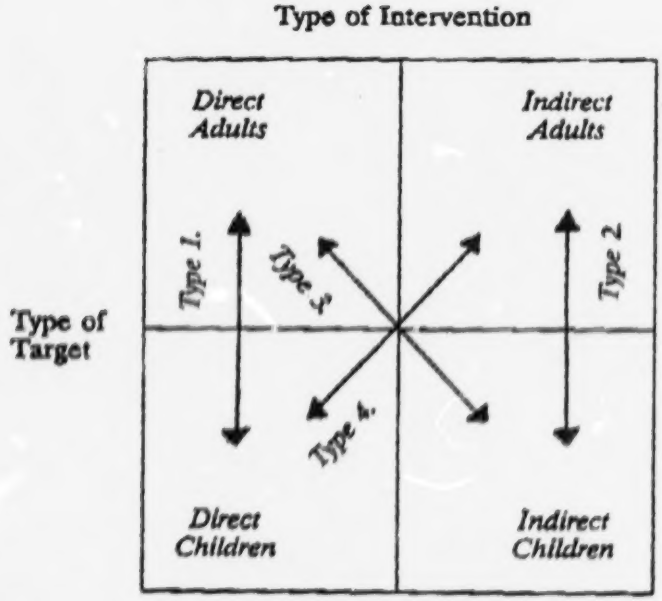

Figure 1. Typology of family and intergenerational literacy programs

Type 1, direct adults/direct children, includes those programs in which both adults and pre-school children receive instruction and participate together in sequenced activities. Type 2, indirect adults/indirect children, according to Nickse, is less structured and less formal, and is illustrated by non-sequential events such as story times, read alongs, or book talks. The third type, direct adults/indirect children includes those programs in which children do not participate directly, although they may indirectly benefit from work done with their parents. The Title VII Family Literacy Project in Boston is one in which only adults attended, though the curriculum was focused on family and parenting concerns. Type IV, direct children/indirect adults is a model in which children are the direct targets. Parents may or may not be invited to participate, but only to support the learning of the children rather than to meet their own literacy needs. It remains to be seen which models of participation hold the most promise for serving immigrant families effectively.

Organizational bases and partnership configurations. Because of the emphasis on early childhood development and school readiness, a majority of family literacy programs are based in primary schools or through school districts. Elementary schools are in an excellent position to articulate their needs in terms of school readiness for future pupils, and are well versed in issues of early childhood development. However, there is a growing recognition of the potential contributions of other organizations connected with other aspects of family life as well. Secondary school personnel are

often in a better position to know what is happening with older children, adult schools (hopefully) are armed with appropriate teaching approaches for adult learners. Community-based organizations with a diversity of programs that are planned and staffed by members of the community served, are often in the best position to understand the contexts in which children and adults use language and literacy, as well as their hopes, their purposes, and their potential.

Many of the strongest family literacy programs are joint efforts in which organizations with complementary resources and expertise collaborate to meet the needs of the family as a whole. The nature and potential of these partnerships will be explored in more detail below.

Family literacy initiatives: What's out there

This section very briefly outlines some of the major initiatives for family literacy, both governmental and private. Next, directions are suggested for evaluating the extent to which these efforts are meeting the needs of language minority families. Because of the constraints in time and resources in preparing this report, and because of the difficulties for program officers themselves in retrieving relevant data on more than a program by program basis, this report can only suggest directions for pursuing these important questions. Finally, the section ends with issues and queries that must be considered in examining the appropriateness of family literacy efforts for language

minority families.

Government efforts

In a summary document on Major Federal Legislation Supporting Family Literacy Efforts, Seibles (1990) summarizes the mandates and funding levels of the Adult Education Act, the Library Services and Construction Act, the Head Start Act, the Family Support Act of 1988 (JOBS), as well as Chapter 1, Title VII and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts. Because the term "family literacy" has different meanings for different people, and because legislation has varied impact on language minorities, this report will briefly describe only that legislation in which family literacy for language minorities is or is most likely to have the potential to be a central concern.

The largest potential source of funds is through the Head Start Act, legislation which allocated nearly $2 billion in the fiscal year 1992 for the Head Start Program. This is administered by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Department of Health and Human Services Regional Offices and the Indian and Migrant Program Branches. It is only recently that family literacy has become a focus for Head Start Programs.

The stated goals for the Family Literacy Initiative in 1991 and 1992 were:

to enable Head Start parents to develop and use literacy skills which enable them to become more active and effective participants in the community, in the workplace, in their child's education and development, and in their efforts to obtain economic and social self-sufficiency; 2) to enhance children's literacy development by helping parents become more effective as their children's 'first teachers' (HHS, "Promoting Family Literacy through Head Start", September, 1991).

to provide ... parents of children who will participate ... with child development and literacy skills training in order to aid their children to attain their full potential (HR 5630, 102nd Congress, July 31, 1992).

At the time of this report, the author does not have available information about the level of funding specifically for family literacy efforts. Because of the sheer amount of resources allocated through this Act, and because of the national commitment to expanding the Head Start program, this will be important legislation to monitor carefully in terms of meeting the needs of language minority families.

Second, through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, two important initiatives will be mentioned here. Even Start is administered under Chapter I, Part B of the act (Even Start Act -- HR2535). The levels of funding have increased from $24.4 million in 1990, $48 million in 1991, to approximately $70 million in 1992, with approximately $200,000 awarded to Each Even Start program across the country.

According to the National Evaluation of Even Start (1991), the purpose of Even Start,

and the stated goals are:

> to improve the educational opportunities of the nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program. The program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services.
>
> [The overall goals are]: 1) to help parents become full partners in the education of their children; 2) to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; 3) to provide literacy training for their parents.

The National Literacy Act of 1991 amended the Even Start Act to change the name to Even Start Family Literacy Program. An independent evaluation and report to Congress was submitted September 30, 1993 on the effectiveness of programs. According to this report, English is the primary language for 71% of participating adults. Of the remaining 29%, 77% are primarily speakers of Spanish, and 23% are speakers of a language other than Spanish. Apart from participation rates, it is difficult to find specific information at a national level about how language minorities in particular fare in Even Start programs. An interview with the program evaluator indicated the challenges faced in assessing gains for language minority adults at anything more than a program-specific level.

The Family English Literacy Program, or Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is administered by the Office of Bilingual Education and Language Minority Affairs (OBEMLA). This program has spent approximately $5

million per year since 1985 to support fund new and existing projects.

As defined by this initiative, Family English Literacy is defined in this way:

> The term family English literacy program means a program of instruction designed to help limited English proficient adults and out-of school youth achieve competence in the English language ... Where appropriate, such programs may include instruction on how parents and family members can facilitate the educational achievement of limited English Proficient children. To the extent feasible, preference for participation in such programs shall be accorded to the parents and the immediate family members of children enrolled in programs assisted under this title.

It should be noted that this program is the only one aimed specifically at language minority families (with the exception of the Migrant and Indian Branches of Head Start). It is important to point out that the budget of Title VII comprises a tiny fraction of monies spent on family literacy efforts in the United States, despite the actual proportion of language minority families in the country who could benefit from such services.

Private Efforts

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy is one of the more prominent foundations devoted entirely to supporting family reading programs. Established in

1989, the stated mission of the foundation is "1) To support the development of family literacy programs; 2) to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy; 3) to establish literacy as a value in every family in America." The program consists of three components:

1. Literacy and parenting education for adults
2. Pre-reading and other literacy activities for children
3. Time for parents to use their newly acquired skills with their children.

(Brizius and Foster, 1993:14)

There is no mention of non-native speakers in the available literature on this program.

The Toyota Families for Learning Program is an example of a corporate effort. Started in 1989, this program is funded through a grant to the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL). Emphasis is on family literacy in mid-sized to large cities. NCFL has created a model for family literacy programs with four components:

1. provide developmental experiences for young children
2. provide basic skills instruction to the children's parents or primary care-givers
3. work with parents and children together for shared learning experience

4. bring parents together in peer support groups to share experiences and overcome obstacles to family learning.

(Brizius and Foster, 1993:15)

NCFL's primary activities are to provide training and technical assistance to state and local leaders, to provide staff development and workshops, to conduct demonstration projects, publish research, and advocate a family literacy agenda for policy.

Analysing current efforts: Agenda for evaluation

To what extent do current family literacy efforts seek to meet the needs of language minority families? To explore this question, it is important to ask, how many program participants are non-native speakers in proportion to eligible candidates in the target service area? Should programs be more aggressive in their recruitment efforts? In their strategies for retention? This is particularly important in high impact states such as California, Texas, New York, and Florida, where language minorities indeed betray their label by comprising a majority in many communities.

To the extent that programs reach out to language minority families, to what extent are they successful meeting their needs? It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate current efforts. However, two sets of questions may be posed for suggesting directions for such an evaluation. First, by their own measures of success, to what

degree do current family literacy efforts meet the needs of language minority families? In the phone interviews conducted for this report, it seemed that most programs indeed have some data on participation of non-native speakers (though even this simple data was difficult to retrieve, depending how "participation" was counted), but few had reliable information about any other gains, including language proficiency or other content.

One of the problems faced by evaluators is that measures of language proficiency are problematic in adult ESL in general. One striking problem is that adults who are not literate in their native language do not even register on CASAS, the most widely used test of English language proficiency. The before and after scores are thus likely to be zero. There are few standardized measures that are appropriate, and fewer yet that match program content. The recent volume, Assessing success (Holt, 1993), provides very useful information for moving in positive directions to address this set of problems.

A second set of questions, then, involves the degree to which the measures of success used in most family literacy programs are appropriate to the felt issues and needs of language minority learners themselves. English proficiency does not exist in and of itself -- rather, language is used for some non-linguistic end. Therefore, it is important that the goals of family literacy programs for language minorities look beyond language proficiency, with larger goals and ways to measure progress toward

those goals. To what extent does a program help families address the themes that repeatedly emerge in language minority families: survival, communication and power/ authority? To what extent does it help children and adults connect and better understand one another? To what extent does it help children understand and reconnect with and value their own heritage? To what extent does it help adults understand the world (and schools) in which their children must manage? Does it assist adults in regaining moral authority over their older children? Does it help children to see their parents and grandparents as important resources? If family literacy efforts are to address the needs of immigrant and language minority families, these questions cannot be ignored in the ways that we measure success.

Appropriateness of services for multilingual families: Issues and queries

Strengths of existing program models. The models, as they have been developed for monolingual families, do have certain strengths which also benefit multilingual families. Immigrant children, like other children, can benefit from efforts to enhance their early development[5]. Theirr parents can benefit from learning about that

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Although current research seems to indicate that too early immersion in English for immigrant children accelerates native language loss, sometimes creating a situation in which parents and children no longer share a common tongue. (See Wong-Fillmore, 1991)

development, and from gaining information about schools, parenting in the United States, nutrition, and other topics that are often central to much adult instruction typical of family literacy programs. These issues are of common concern to speakers of English and speakers of other languages alike. In addition, the growing recognition of the family as a critical support in the success of its members is a very positive step forward in providing effective educational services to both children and adults.

Obstacles to reaching, serving language minorities and meeting their needs. While the popularity of family literacy programs is growing, it will be important to examine the degree to which programs designed primarily for native speakers reach language minorities, and their proportion of the general population in the target area.

With the exception of the Title VII Family English Literacy Program, and the Indian and Migrant Program Branches of Head Start, (which constitute a fraction of available family literacy monies), very few of the resources available for family literacy are specifically geared towards addressing the special needs of bilingual families. There are several obstacles to serving these families, and limits to the usefulness of existing models for the realities of immigrant family life. Even those programs aimed specifically at non-native speakers of English often have a poor record of sustained participation-- indication in part, the degree to which immigrant families (do not) feel that their needs are being met. At any Title VII conference on family literacy, the most popular workshops are those on "Recruitment" and

"Retention". That is to say, the biggest problem facing program administrators is to get the families through the door of their programs and to keep them there. One educational consultant, in his request to me for staff development for one particular project, commented "their attendance has gone from 60 to 7 families, and they still don't know anything is wrong!"

The problems faced by family literacy programs in attracting and retaining immigrant families is a source of enormous frustration to educators. A bilingual Cambodian teacher's comments echo the sentiments of many teachers and program administrators throughout the United States:

> I visit them (the Cambodians) in their homes. I explain why it's important for them to come. I even call them the night before to remind them. 'Yes', they say. 'I'm coming'. Then, next morning, I wait, no one comes. So I call them. -- U. Thiem, Bilingual teacher

The shared experience of teachers and administrators like this one lies behind much family literacy programming. Our instinct is to do what is necessary to fill the open houses and to get parents to help with homework. We want the children to do better in school, and we know that parents can make a difference.

Why is it that parents do not come? What is happening in these seemingly invisible families? What are the resources and constraints that shape the responses of adults? What are the strategies that parents use in supporting their children? With an understanding of resources and constraints, it becomes possible to know what is possible and what is appropriate when immigrant adults are asked to participate in

family literacy programs. Some of these include the educational history of the group, the relationships of schools with families in the country of origin, the set of sociolinguistic rules governing behavior between children and adults, and the other stresses of parenting in a complex new setting. These are examined briefly below.

What educational resources have immigrants brought with them? This varies widely from group to group. Koreans, for example, come from a country where 97% of the population is functionally literate (CDOE, 1992). In Korea, virtually all citizens have access to public education. As immigrants rather than refugees, Koreans had time to prepare, plan, and make their move with minimal stress and interruption to their own or their children's education. The move itself was often an attempt to improve educational opportunities.

In contrast, Cambodians with any educational experience were the first to be exterminated under the Pol Pot regime. Those who escaped from Cambodia either had little education, or were able to effectively pretend that they hadn't. Centuries of literature were destroyed. During years in flight, many refugees began their educational experiences in refugee camps. Depending on the time spent in the camp and the set-up of the camp's educational program, a variety of educational experiences were available to different refugee groups. Literacy and schooling are not always synonymous. Many Hmong refugees from Laos, despite a history of inexperience with formal schooling, have been quite successful at learning Hmong literacy through informal channels, such as one-on-one teaching by family members.

For adults who do not have histories of educational experience, despite their dreams for their children, reading English storybooks or helping their children with

their homework are simply not options. In her research among Mexican parents, Delgado-Gaitan (1987) documents the hopes and frustrations of Mexican parents who desperately want something better for their children. She demonstrates the ways in which these adults provide supports within the limits of their resources in a system that does not tap into their potential for more substantial involvement. Just as Southeast Asians may have sold their most precious commodity, land, to send one child to school in Asia, so now many families find ingenious ways to support their children despite their own limited educational and literacy resources. One Hmong clan, the Lors, decided at a meeting in Nebraska to hold parties for Lor children all over the country, giving them a quarter for each "A" earned in school. These adults, not literate themselves, are grappling with creative ways to support their children's success in school.

In order to invite adults to participate in their children's schooling, it is helpful to have some information about relationships between teachers, parents and children in the country of origin. For many Asian immigrants, such as the Lao, while high value is placed on education, it is considered the teachers' responsibility to provide moral and spiritual education of children. Cambodians refer to teachers as the "second parent" who is entrusted with the child's care. The same parents who do not show up at open house come from a country where it is seen as inappropriate for parents to intervene in any way with the teacher's job (CDOE, 1988). Families such as these may be quite puzzled when they are invited to give input. The passive role of parents may be exacerbated by language barriers and lack of understanding of the American school system.

A second consideration for program planners and recruiters is the set of sociolinguistic rules governing behavior between children and adults. Among Hmong refugees, children learn by observing adults and by talking with peers. Conversations between children and adults are not the norm. One researcher comments that not only are Filipino children not to be heard, they are also to remain unseen. According to Jocano (1982), "strict obedience and discipline are demanded and bred by the parent of the child" (cited in CDOE, 1986 p34). Some of the interactions that occur in American educational programs may seem inappropriate to adults and children who are operating under unspoken rules that require children to signal respect by repressing their own ideas and desires in the presence of adults.

A third issue to consider is the need to be sensitive when offering to "teach" parenting skills. It is easy to forget that the groups from which immigrant learners come have been parenting effectively for centuries. It can certainly be argued that before the disruptions of displacement, many immigrant families had more experience than most Americans with maintaining strong extended families, raising secure children, and creating family support networks that nurture children and elders alike.

While adults may have been very effective parents in their previous contexts, strategies that worked in one setting may no longer respond to realities of new contexts. Parenting in the United States can be quite baffling for some newcomers, who may feel that parental authority is limited by law (e.g. regarding corporal punishment), yet schools and other societal systems are not up to the task of keeping children in line. While back in the homeland, families often had the resources of the full community for dealing with the problems of their children, there is no such

support in a setting where the problems may be more serious and complicated. Adults may look on with horror as their children dabble with drugs or join city gangs in neighborhoods where few positive alternatives exist for youth. Cambodian adults often complain that their children threaten to call a "child-abuse hotline" and have them taken to jail if they strike them. At a family literacy effort in Western Massachusetts, after a program session on "child abuse", one Cambodian man joked that he preferred to have a session on parent abuse (Weinstein-Shr, 1992)!

For adults to come to grips with raising their children in a new setting, it is not enough to "teach" them how to do things the way Americans do. Adults need a setting where they can gather information about their new setting and evaluate for themselves both traditional and new strategies for dealing with discipline, with school, or other complex issues involved with raising children in a complicated world. The lived experiences of adults before resettlement and after, in the realities of our rural and urban neighborhoods, must become part of the considerations for providing family literacy support that makes sense.

If family literacy programs are to truly address the needs of language minority families, it will be critical for them to address those issues in which language and literacy play a major part. The most pressing family and parenting issues for language minority adults are not usually associated with their younger children, but rather with negotiating new relationships with older children in the face of native language loss, enigmatic schools, and dangerous cities where the potential dangers for their children are terrifying and real.

Research available, research needed. Research from a school perspective has as its driving concern the primary question: How can we help children do better in school? Educational research from several domains indicates the importance of parents in the school achievement of their children. Scholars of "emergent literacy" point to evidence that conceptual development happens during the earliest years in life (Teal, 1982, Teale and Suzlby, 1986), leading to emphasis on parents as the "first teacher". Children's achievement in school has been demonstrated to be directly correlated with mother's level of education (Sticht & McDonald, 1989). In addition, it is clear that parent behaviors, such as ways of "scaffolding" or constructing conversations, ways of talking about pictures in books, ways of telling bedtime stories, and other ways of interacting around print are important factors in predicting children's school success (Heath, 1982).

The impact of parents and home environment has also been a recent focus of scholars interested in language minority children. Attempts to understand school achievement have focused on early literacy and language at home (e.g. Cochran-Smith, 1984) and on other school-home differences (e.g. Cummins, 1981, Moll and Diaz 1987). Results of these studies have been aimed at helping educators understand differences in order to sensitize teachers and to facilitate academic learning.

With the addition of a family perspective, other research questions also become important. Children's achievement in school becomes only one minor part of the picture. There are models of research which seek, as part of their goal, to illuminate the perspectives of adults who wish to acquire literacy. Gillespie (in press) gives a brief summary of qualitative research that explores perspectives of second language

learners in terms of their purposes for learning language and literacy and how they view themselves in that process. Ethnographic work of Reder and Green (1987) in four ethnic communities illustrates the possibilities for broadening concepts of literacy as we examine functions in diverse settings. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' (1988) work among African Americans illustrates the enormous resources families must have to get by in a bureaucratic world that relentlessly hurls obstacles in their path. A study by Rockhill (1990) among Latinas in Los Angeles raises provocative questions about the cost of literacy as learning to read challenges existing relationships. Rockhill found that women's aspirations for literacy were often met with violence from their partners. These studies provide examples of how we can examine the role of literacies in the lives of adults, and the consequences that literacy practices have for their lives and their relationships, both with their children and with one another.

Specific studies of language use in families may hold the most promise for gaining useful insights for practical work. Researchers such as Wong-Fillmore (1991), for example, warn that where language loss was once a three-generational process, recent inquiry seems to indicate that in families where children attend English or bilingual pre-schools, the process has been accelerated to two generations, resulting in generations of parents and children who have difficulty talking with one another. Immersion in English at too early an age, she suggests, can be devastating to family relationships if support for native language development is lacking. If this analysis is correct, not only are immigrant children losing the chance to tap the resources of their grandparents, they are also losing a language of communication with parents. This gives some urgency to our mission: there is important work to be done. There is little

we know about the processes by which uprooted families manage their new lives, and the crucial role of language and literacy in that process.

If research is to take into account the perspectives of families, it must address the themes that emerge from their lives. The questions below, growing from the themes raised in Section I of this report, provide an example of how we might begin:

Survival: How do refugees, immigrants (or any families served by schools) solve or fail to solve problems that require literacy skills? (This requires seeking to discover existing resources in addition to those that are lacking)

Communication: What are the functions and uses of literacy (both native and second language) in the lives of people that are served? Who uses what language to whom and under what circumstances? What are the consequences of this particular communicative economy? What is the implication for home-school communications (including the parents' experience of those communications)

Power/authority: What is the significance of language in the negotiation of new roles and relationships in a new setting? How has authority and power shifted in families? What is the role of language in intergenerational relationships? What are the ways in which schools influence the process in which these relationships are negotiated?

These are not questions for researchers alone, but also for teachers, program

planners and learners themselves to explore through our family literacy work. Promising directions for that work are explored below.

III. Promising Directions in Family Literacy Programming

Programs that aim to strengthen families and communities while developing literacy resources are likely to be as diverse as the communities they serve. However there are certain characteristics that repeatedly arise in promising programs. These include broadened notions of family literacy, partnerships that are truly collaborative, building on learner strengths, and building on-going inquiry into the fabric of family literacy work.

The program conceptualizes family literacy in a broad way.

There is no doubt that the cognitive development of young children and the school achievement of older children are important for the well-being of families. However, once the planning for family literacy moves beyond the perspectives of school personnel alone to the most pressing concerns of families, other issues also become important. To meet the needs of families as they themselves perceive them, there need to be channels for participants to voice those needs. In the Family English Literacy Program in Boston, for example, the stated goals of the project were "to increase the social significance of literacy in family life by incorporating community cultural forms and social issues into the content of literacy activities" (Auerbach, 1992). Toward this end, the project used a participatory curriculum, in which the students themselves

determined the direction and thus the content of their classes. This requires examining literacy in the broader context of family and community life.

By taking the whole family into account, it becomes impossible to ignore one of the richest cultural resources-- the wisdom of elders. It is evident that alienation is one result of losing connection to one's own past. Language shift accelerates the process by which elders become invisible in their own families and communities, a loss to all concerned, particularly children. At Project LEIF, one of the stated goals is to use literacy as a vehicle to connect the generations. Young volunteers work with refugee elders, teaching English while collecting memories and riveting stories of village life, of courtship and escape, which can be passed on to children and grandchildren. There is great potential for innovative family programming that re-creates channels for cultural transmission, helping kids to stay connected to their families, their communities and their past.

Collaboration is crucial.

It is helpful to recognize the continuum from coordination to cooperation and finally to collaboration (Even Start Focus paper, Portsmouth NH). When efforts are truly collaborative, the agendas of all partners are met while a program is created which is greater than that which could be accomplished by any of the partners alone. One strength of Even Start legislation and programming is that collaboration is built in to the fabric of the required program design.

Programs that include both children and adults are strongest when they involve the creative imagination and joint effort of both child and adult educators. Project CLASS in Atlanta, Georgia, and Sunnyside Up in Tucson, Arizona, are examples of such efforts, where children and adults work separately in their own classes and then join one another for collaboratively planned intergenerational activities (Nurses, 1993; Dilworth, in press). When qualified child and adult educators plan together, both are stretched in the process for provision of services that are richer than either one alone could provide. The structure of Even Start funding requires collaborations of this type.

A second kind of collaboration is that between community-based organizations that knows the needs and resources of a particular community and educational agencies. In Project LEIF, for example, Temple University recruited and trained volunteers, while the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition helped to identify elders and articulate their expressed interests. To meet the needs of multilingual communities, it will be important to foster more collaborative efforts with organizations that have a history of understanding particular communities, including their special resources and the felt needs of the members.

The time is ripe for exploring further collaborations through English language teaching- between senior centers and schools; between advocacy groups and language professionals; between ESL providers and counselling agencies that are equipped to deal with post-traumatic stress syndrome, alcoholism, drug abuse, and other symptoms of difficult lives in difficult times.

Value is placed on traditional culture as well as on the new language and culture.

Children who understand their own background and culture are more likely to have the self-esteem needed to acquire a second language and culture. Adults whose knowledge and wisdom is valued will be in a better position to support their children in school and elsewhere; they will also be in a better position to be helped by their children without having their dignity or their role as parent threatened.

Programs that incorporate oral history and exploration of native language and culture as part of the curriculum create a strong base for adding new cultural information and values while strengthening families and communities. At the Navajo Parent Child Reading Program (Viola, Gray, & Murphy, 1986), children listen to the stories of elders in the native language, and sometimes write, translate or illustrate as they listen. In the Pajaro Valley program for Latino families (Ada, 1988), a love of literature is fostered through activities such as storytelling in both the native language and in English, and through reading Spanish literature as part of the program. For communities in which native language literacy is not the norm, support for literacy acquisition and maintenance is a very promising component for strengthening what Moll (1992) calls "community funds of knowledge". Many innovative programs offer both ESL and native language instruction to children and adults.

Nurturing "community funds of knowledge" also requires building on learner strengths. A "Parent Circle" is an activity in which adults from similar backgrounds talk with one another to articulate their parenting needs, gather new information, and

come up with potential solutions with the support and collective experience of peers (Habana-Hefner, n.d.). The Keenan model's inclusion of "parent time" has the potential to offer a similar benefits. The use of native language in such activities seems appropriate and constructive. It may make sense to offer similar opportunities to elders and children as well to share among themselves, and eventually with one another, the challenges of membership in their own generation in America.

Inquiry is built into the fabric of program planning, curriculum and teaching.

The functions and uses of language and literacy in specific communities are of growing interest to many educational researchers (e.g. Heath, 1983). These can also become the concern of family educators, and children and adults themselves who can examine their own language and literacy use as part of the educational process. By making explicit what is, programs make it possible for individuals to imagine what might be.

Strong programs create ways to learn about the language and literacy needs of participants in the program planning, in the development of curriculum, and in the fabric of day-to-day teaching itself. At Project FIEL in Texas, participating parents kept journals of their children's language use, and of their own growth as parents, and as users of Spanish and English literacy (Macias, in press). The documentation of language use and expanding goals became part of day to day teaching, but it also informed program planning as participants resources grew and their needs changed. The process of discovery on the part of administrators, teachers and learners

themselves must be on-going and deliberate for programs to continue to meet the changing needs of participants and of communities.

When programs acknowledge learner strengths, and when educators assume an inquiring stance, the relationships between adults and schools takes a different cast. Transmission of information between schools and parents is no longer seen as one-way, from schools to parents (Auerbach, in press). Rather, parents work to learn about the culture and expectations of the schools that serve their children, while schools work to learn about the culture and expectations of the parents. With this perspective, family literacy teachers are mediators who can help parents understand the information provided by schools, while articulating to schools the concerns of adults and the logic of their responses to school initiatives. The spirit of inquiry suggests the work between two parties who must understand one another before they can negotiate mutually acceptable ways of working together.

With recognition of the strengths that multilingual families bring to programs, with collaborative work, with attention to traditional forms of knowledge, and with deliberate investigation of literacy and its uses, it becomes possible to imagine schools that understand and respond to families and communities; families that cooperate with schools toward agreed-upon goals; and generations who find in one another the resources to remember their past and to take on their present and future with confidence and joy.

IV. Making it Happen: Preliminary thoughts on Policy

II concur with the findings of the Southport Institute for Policy Analysis that in

order to address the needs of language minority learners, it is imperative to create an office specifically equipped for the task. The establishment of an Office of Adult English as a Second Language, drawing on the expertise of those who have a history of service to speakers of languages other than English, would be an appropriate first step. The recommendations here assume the creation of such an office, within which, I propose the creation of an Institute for Immigrant Family Literacies (IIFL).

The Institute for Immigrant Family Literacies would have the following mission:

1. to examine the efficacy of existing family literacy models for serving language minority families and multilingual communities;
2. to collect and develop materials for implementing the most effective models;
3. to support linkages between appropriate networks (child, adult, senior citizen, CBO);
4. to create a skills bank of providers who have successfully served these families;
5. to train these successful providers to assist new programs;
6. to provide technical assistance as outlined below;
7. to oversee innovative demonstration projects;
8. to conduct research on the role of language and literacy in family life.

The kinds of activities that can be promoted through small grants and technical assistance include the promotion of cooperation between organizations, the appropriate use of bilingual personnel, the representation of community members in program

design, implementation and evaluation; recognition of native language literacy as a potential resource; and the institutionalization of inquiry as part of program planning, curriculum development and instruction.

The creation of such a department would make it possible to more effectively address the needs of immigrant families by improving existing educational efforts and by creating new models. Specifically, the following activities are briefly addressed below: 1) work with existing age-serrated programs in addressing the larger family and community contexts of learners; 2) work with the existing family literacy infrastructure to better meet the needs of immigrants in their own efforts; and 3) to create new demonstration projects as a learning laboratory for innovation.

Assist existing age-segregated educational programs

In adult education, this could entail assistance in incorporating family concerns into traditional curricula for adults. Input from early childhood specialists, elementary and secondary school personnel, and collaboration with ethnic community leaders all hold promise for making traditional adult classes more relevant for learners and for addressing their family concerns. The inclusion of special classes for elders should be part of the vision for adult education if lifelong learning is more than rhetoric, and if family interdependence is central to the nation's educational goals.

Technical assistance to primary and secondary schools can promote positive practices such as the creation of parent centers within schools; the promotion of "parent circles" in which parents of school-age children gain the collective support to

voice their concerns about schooling, and assistance in creating channels for two-way communication between schools and families. Attention to the role of language and culture in these efforts is particularly critical.

Community-based organizations can tap this institute for assistance in creating programs that link youth and elders in positive ways, in using native language literacy instruction to connect the generations, and in creating opportunities for youth and elders to learn about the challenges faced by the other generations.

The aging network is a resource that has been ignored by federal educational efforts. An Institute for Immigrant Family Literacies can provide leadership in promoting ESL efforts at senior centers, tapping oral histories of immigrant elders for primary school curriculum in particular, and promoting creative efforts to tap the resources of elders for schools, families and communities in general.

Work within the existing family literacy infrastructure

It is this author's belief that all federal family literacy initiatives should be assisted in serving an appropriate proportion of non-native speakers as per the population in their area of mandate. Many existing programs that provide family literacy find themselves limited in their ability to recruit language minority families, to retain them, and to provide effective services once participants have made a commitment to the program. Technical assistance can be directed at helping programs to adapt program models to the realities of immigrants, assisting in the development of strategies for program planning, recruitment, provision of instruction and tools for appropriate assessment and evaluation.

The Institute would also make resources available to private efforts, including foundations, corporate initiatives and resource centers who wish to more effectively serve linguistically diverse members of their own communities.

Create demonstration projects as a laboratory for innovative practices:

IIFL would be charged with overseeing the funding of demonstration projects characterized by these key features: Collaborations of both traditional on non-traditional partners; qualitative and quantitative documentation along with development of new measures for both linguistic and non-linguistic goals; and systematic support for nurturing leadership and replicating promising practices in other sites. These are discussed briefly below.

The promotion of collaborative efforts can be achieved through an RFP process that requires partnership, and through a system of incentives for different sorts of collaborations. Specifically, a variety of models would be explored through granting set-asides to partnerships between public schools, adult education programs, senior centers, ethnic-based CBO's, and other community services (e.g. legal aid, housing or substance abuse programs). Focus on non-traditional partnerships is to be encouraged through the allocation of monies.

Documentation would need to be a critical part of the process, in which incentives are created to document pitfalls and difficulties as well as successes and movement

toward program goals. Because of the pioneering nature of this work, honest documentation must be rewarded rather than punished, as practitioners struggle with problems that are complex. Part of the work to be accomplished is to see evidence of on-going inquiry about the role of language and literacy in learners' lives built into the fabric of program design. Second, as part of the work in measuring program success through quantitative and qualitative means, developing the system of measuring success itself must become part of the overall program development process.

After analysis of innovative programs, on-going support must be provided to innovative practitioners for disseminating their own learnings to other sites. This should be encouraged through the development of program development manuals, training and curriculum modules, and support for leadership development among those who are in the best position to disseminate findings- the practitioners themselves.

With new models for innovative partnerships, expanded ways to document on-going challenges and successes; and resources for nurturing leadership development, it will become possible to expand the material and human resources for rising to this exciting challenge.

When families provide haven and security for their members, adults and children alike are in a better position to take care of themselves and of one another. All of us have much to gain from the prospect of interdependent families whose members thrive in synergy. Furthermore, families in bilingual and multilingual communities are like a

treasure chest of linguistic and cultural riches. It is through families that culture is first transmitted through the stories of our pasts, and through the teaching of values that make our life journeys manageable and worthwhile. Our educational work can either tap and nurture these riches or preside over their rapid demise. The thoughtful development of family literacy efforts can play an important role in determining which of these roads, as a nation, we choose to travel.

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